

REMARKS

The following numbered paragraphs are provided to respond to similarly numbered paragraphs in the Office Action (e.g., paragraph “1” below corresponds to paragraph 1 in the Office Action).

2. The Office Action rejected claims 1- 22 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Zulu (6,039,133). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant has canceled claim 1. Applicant has amended claim 2 to incorporate claim 1 as originally filed. The claims that depended on claim 1 have been amended to depend on claim 2.

Zulu fails to disclose or suggest a sensitivity selector. The articulated angle sensor 79 of Zulu is not a sensitivity selector. The articulated angle sensor 79 measures the “actual angle of articulation between the front frame structure 12 and the rear frame structure 14” (col. 5, lines 34-37). The processor of Zulu processes the signal from the angle sensor along with signals from the position sensor and the speed sensors in order to control the position of the proportional valves (col. 5, lines 48-51). The data from the articulated angle sensor is used by the processor to limit the actual angle of articulation to a magnitude less than the threshold angle of articulation (col. 6 lines 25-35). The data from the sensor influences the rate of change of the angle of articulation when the allowable angle of articulation is approached. The data from the sensor is not used to select sensitivity to a steering input.

Zulu fails to disclose or suggest that the setting of the sensitivity sensor may be determined directly by an operator. The articulated angle sensor 79 of does not have any settings; therefore, it can’t be set by an operator to a setting

Regarding claim 3, Zulu fails to disclose or suggest the operator selecting between at least two different settings, one of them causing the processor to produce more steering response for a given input from the steering input device than the other. The articulated angle sensor may not be set to at least at two different settings. Additionally, it does not produce more steering response for a given input.

Regarding claim 4, Zulu fails to disclose or suggest the gear of the vehicle determining what the setting of the sensitivity selector is. The articulated angle sensor 79 of Zulu does not have any settings; therefore, its setting can’t be determined by the gear of the vehicle.

Regarding claim 5, Zulu fails to disclose or suggest that the setting of the sensitivity selector determines the rate at which articulation takes place in response to a given operator input to the steering device. Zulu does not disclose controlling the rate of articulation based on the setting of the sensitivity selector or in response to a given operator input to the steering device.

Regarding claims 8 and 9, Zulu discloses a control handle 56 and manual steering actuator 53 (col. 5 lines 17-18, FIG. 1) but fails to disclose or suggest an electronic joystick or an electronic steering wheel.

Applicant has amended claim 11 to correct a typographical error.

Regarding claim 12, Zulu fails to disclose or suggest that an operator input device may allow an operator to input a tire size.

Regarding claim 13, Zulu fails to disclose or suggest that the processor may determine a maximum articulation angle based on a tire size input. Zulu discloses a threshold angle of articulation and a predetermined maximum angle of articulation but does not disclose or suggest that these angles are determined by a processor based on a tire size input. Zulu does not disclose or suggest how the predetermined maximum angle is determined.

Regarding claim 18, Zulu does not disclose or suggest that the processor may control the valves to align the axes of two frames to be generally parallel from a generally non-parallel position in response to a steering input device being returned to a center position. The Zulu reference discloses that when the operator positions the control handle so as to direct the work machine in a straight direction, which means that the axes of the two frames are already parallel, the processor will not generate control signals so that the work vehicle continues in a straight direction (col. 9, lines 34-67).

Regarding claim 19, Zulu does not disclose or suggest that the operator may input the tire size and that the maximum articulation angle may be based on the tire size input by the operator.

Regarding claim 20, Zulu does not disclose or suggest that an interface operatively connecting a steering input device to a processor may be the same for different types of steering input devices. Zulu discloses that the “manual steering actuator 53 includes a position sensor 55 operatively coupled to a control handle 56” (col. 5 lines 17-18). Zulu does not disclose or suggest any other type of steering input device other than a control handle and does not disclose or suggest that any other type of steering input device would operate with the manual steering actuator 53 and position sensor 55.

Regarding claim 21, Zulu does not disclose or suggest that a processor may give priority of flow from the source of hydraulic fluid to the steering valve.

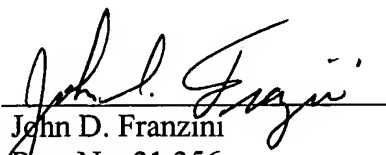
Regarding claim 22, Zulu does not disclose or suggest that a valve may be a four-way, three-position hydraulic valve.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant believes claims 2-22 of the present application recite patentable subject matter and allowance of the same is requested. Applicant requests that the appropriate fee be charged for adding a fourth independent claim. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees arising as a result of this Amendment or any other communication, to Deposit Account No. 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,

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